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### High Status Turkish Women Administrators in Higher Education

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High Status of Turkish Women Administrators in Higher Education

"Everything we see in the world is the creative work of woman"

M. K. Ataturk

Currently, there are inequalities in the representation of females in higher administrative positions in higher education, a result of historical and male dominant societal patterns (Byrd-Blake, 2004). While many cultures in the world support and encourage men in their achievement, women are generally discouraged (Brown & Irby, 2001). For many centuries, the opinions of some philosophers and scientists about women and women's education have caused differentiation between women's and men's specializations and their place in society.

In the U. S. in the 1820s, common schools were opened to help close the illiteracy gap between men and women, but women's education was viewed only for its importance for men. Educated women were needed to raise the next generation of young men into statesmen and philosophers, and educated women were necessary as agreeable companions for their well-placed husbands (Bengiveno, 1995; Miller-Solomon, 1985). In short, education was perceived as a vehicle for making women better wives, homemakers, and mothers. Even earlier, in *Emilie*, Rousseau (1911) stated that women's education must be planned in relation to men's needs. By the middle of the 19th century, science, specifically biology, was used to justify the differences between genders. Clark (1873), from the medical community, argued that women's brains were less developed than men's so women should not be taught in the same manner as men (Nidiffer, 2001). These kinds of writings and the beliefs upon which they are founded, therefore, were barriers to a coeducation system, as well as barriers to women's achievement in many fields. Nevertheless, in the 19th century and later, some fields were open to females. These included, in particular, teacher preparation, home economics, languages, humanities, and social work. On the other hand, professional schools of law, medicine, business, and divinity were dominated by male students (Chliwniak, 1997).

Increasingly, throughout the 20th century, women have worked in education, particularly in early childhood education. By the end of the 20th century, women's work in education also included high school and even the principalship in elementary schools (Casanova, 1991; Kossan, 2006). What has changed most in the last two and half decades is the type of work women are doing: They still teach, but now it is not uncommon for women to be principals of high schools, superintendents of schools, and professors in colleges and universities. Yet, slightly over 18% of tenured full professors are women, although women comprise over 52% of the student body. In addition, women in top executive positions in universities are still rare (Cage, 1994).

The most current data on women in presidential positions in higher education were provided through a study conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE), Office of Women in Higher Education, reported by Rigaux (1995). Findings indicated that of 2,903 higher education institutions branch and affiliated campuses, 16% are headed by women presidents; only 25% of academic deans are women. Rigaux reported that the

highest proportion of women leaders were found in two-year institutions (27%), and women were more likely to lead small institutions. Seventy-one percent of female leaders headed colleges and universities which have full time enrollments of less than 3,000 students. Switzer (2006) indicated, however, that the American Council on Education reported that the percentage of women presidents increased from 9.5 to 21.1% in the 15 years, from 1986 to 2001.

Today, throughout the world, many institutions, like the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), are carrying out projects to eliminate gender inequalities in higher education and to empower women so that they can assume powerful positions. Although the student body in universities has changed significantly in favor of female enrollment during the last several decades, the most recent data relating to the presidency and academic leadership in higher education institutions indicate that women are still underrepresented in all leadership ranks (Cage, 1994; Polnick, Reed, Funk, & Edmonson, 2004).

A report by Ronning (2001) also pointed out that women in higher education have to overcome the following barriers: "(a) societal and family attitudes, as well as cultural stereotyping, (b) lower enrollment figures and limited access, and (c) lack of role models and the glass ceiling syndrome" (p. 15). Some of the projects carried out by UNESCO are aimed to break not only tangible barriers, but also the hardest barriers of all, the invisible ones, and to change people's attitudes and promote women into decision-making positions. Some of the invisible barriers include unwritten rules for behavior and a lack of understanding of the need for a family-friendly work environment. Though social changes have taken place in many countries where men take their share of home responsibilities, there is still a long way to go. In addition, it is important not just to get women into top positions, but to use their influence to change the workplace and society into more humane places (Ronning, 2001).

Research on administration shows that although women and men experience the same kind of administrative roles, such as decision-making, motivation, coordination, and communication, their leadership styles differ. Employees within the institution and society also expect differences in manner between women and men in their administrative roles (Madden, 2002; Patton, 1990). It is important, therefore, that the academic community understands how underrepresented high status female administrators experience their administrative roles regarding decision-making, coordination, motivation, and communication. In addition, the world needs to see what kinds of advantages and barriers women administrators experience in their professional and personal lives in traditional and male-dominant societies.

Decision-making can be defined as the process of choosing among alternatives; therefore, this process plays a crucial role in educational administration. Decision-making affects all other administrative functions: motivation, communication, planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, and controlling (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996). Therefore, every decision has a certain amount of influence on faculty, staff, and student performance, ultimately affecting the development of the organization and society. Research related to women and men administrators indicates that women and men have a different manner as regards to the decision-making process. Leadership behaviors related to women are those of nurturing, caring for others, focusing on relationships, and using interpersonal skills. In general, women use a democratic, participative, consensus building, and collaborative decision-making approach, whereas men use an autocratic approach focusing on rules, outcomes, tasks, making decisions for others, and discouraging subordinates from participating in decision-making (Casal & Mulligan, 2004; Helgesen, 1990; 1995; Lyman, Ashby, & Tripses, 2005; Madden, 2002; Milwid, 1990). However, findings suggest controversial perceptions about female administration. Even if a democratic, participative manner creates a more effective climate in the workplace, when female administrators exercise this collaborative style of leadership their employees may perceive this approach as an indication of women administrators' incompetence. When women administrators practice autocratic power as the men do, female staff members are especially critical, saying that the female administrators are behaving like men. These stereotypes are challenges for female administrators to overcome (Bass, 1985; Hofstede, 1991; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Instructional leadership, participatory governance in decision-making, and empowering stake holders are important functions to fulfill for female administrators in order to motivate faculty, staff, and students. Administrators widely agree that motivation plays a crucial role in the performance of employees and students, and ultimately, the organization. Motivation is positively affected by a communal leadership style which is usually associated with women. Communal leaders easily motivate and coordinate their followers since they demonstrate a concern for the welfare of other people by displaying such characteristics as

helpfulness, kindness, sympathy, sensitivity, and other "gentle" characteristics. These leaders explain rules and procedures to ensure that people understand them. For female leaders, it is important to provide for their employees optimum satisfaction, fairness, motivation, respect, and pride (McCaffery, 2004; Williamson & Hudson, 2001). But none of these behaviors excludes innovation or creative thinking.

Communal attributes associated with women leadership also require good verbal and written communication. Communication is defined as the "essence of organizations" (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Research results show that executive administrators spend 80% of their time in interpersonal communication (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996). The administrators of educational organizations have a multifaceted job, which includes defining mission and vision, setting objectives, organizing tasks, motivating employees, reviewing results, and making decisions. These tasks cannot be accomplished without adequate communication. Effective communication necessitates active listening, understanding, empathy, and feedback.

According to some of the literature, women's and men's communication styles are distinctly different from each other as a result of social conditioning. Women are expected to learn linguistic adaptation for socially normed roles. Women's communication patterns are generally to elicit cooperation or create rapport, whereas men's is to negotiate status and often engage in verbal competition in a definitive and forceful fashion (Samovar & Porter, 2003).

Tannen's study of sociolinguistic patterns of men's and women's relationships at work points out that "conversational rituals common among women are often ways of maintaining an appearance of equality and expending effort to downplay the speaker's authority" (Tannen, 1994, p. 23). This manner, however, often is interpreted as a lack of confidence and competence. Men's conversational rituals involve using opposition in an effort to avoid the one-down position in the interaction.

Tannen (1994) and Thorn (1994) found that gender-related communication patterns constrain how girls and women express leadership. Women generally phrase their ideas as suggestions rather than orders, whereas men express hierarchical and high status manners. Although men's style is accepted as an indication of competency, when women behave in the same manner they are seen as "bossy girls," even by other women. The result is that women in leadership positions, regardless of competence levels, are not supported by either women or men when they appear to carry out their leadership role in an assertive or definitive manner (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Johnson, 1993). Studies of gender differences and women's communication modes indicate weaknesses as well as strengths related to women's way of knowing (Ferguson, 1984). Women administrators, more than men, need to overcome stereotypical expectations from their colleagues, employees, and ultimately, society. Shakeshaft (1989) found that many women leave their administrative roles because of the attitudes of others toward women. Brile (1987) even found that women were more likely than men to sabotage women colleagues in the workplace.

Gilligan's (1982) research indicates that being "nice" to others at the expense of being self-appreciating and/or confrontational, depending on the situation, has negative effects for women. Women need to overcome this challenge, which is to recognize the difference between concession and negotiation. Concession damages the leadership potential, negotiation builds institutional relationships and empowers members; these are skills that all leaders need.

Women administrators have many challenges in performing their administrative functions which are mentioned above. As a high status administrator in higher education, being a female may also cause some constraints in a woman's professional and personal life. Many research findings suggest that women administrators must balance their personal and professional lives carefully. Authors advise female administrators to take care of themselves physically and mentally, and get support from their family and friends (Madden, 2002; Simmons & Jarchow, 1990).

Shakeshaft and Nowell (1984) reported that women find satisfaction in administrative roles and can attain self-actualization. Women administrators certainly gain status, recognition, respect, and intellectual fulfillment because of their positions. They also have some challenges and costs because of their positions, such as expanded responsibilities, stereotypical expectations, narrow options, stress, and time limitations. According to Stiegemeier (1980), female administrators' expanded responsibilities are as follows: they must be well-prepared, be informed, dress professionally, act professionally, have a good sense of humor, treat others with respect, be assertive, and believe in themselves. In addition, many writers believe a women must be more competent and work harder than a man in order to attain the same career advancement (Simmons &

Jarchow, 1990).

In essence, female administrators gain some benefits and have some costs in their professional and personal lives. Because of this, it is crucial to scrutinize female administrators at the top of the decision-making hierarchy in different cultural settings to see how they perform their main administrative roles, such as decision-making, motivation and coordination, and communication; whether they encounter any gender discrimination; and what benefits and costs they experience in their professional and personal lives. This study examines how high status Turkish women administrators' exercise their administrative functions and whether they experience gender discrimination in their professional and personal lives. Before explaining the research methodology, it is necessary to look at Turkish female education and how Turkish women gained their rights.

#### *Women in Turkey*

Turkey is one of the countries that has been trying to close the gap between women and men in the high status administrative positions in higher education. To understand the positions of Turkish women in society necessitates a brief look at history. When we scrutinize the history of how Turkish women gained equal rights with men in every field, Turkish women's stories appear to have been different from that of others. In contrast to women in countries such as the U.S. or the UK, Turkish women did not act to gain their rights. After the Turkish Independence War and establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923), the overall literacy rate was 6-7% throughout the nation. Women's literacy rate was even less than that. Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey and its first president, launched many reforms to give Turkish women equal rights and opportunities. The Civil Code, adopted in 1926, abolished polygamy and recognized the equal rights of women in divorce, custody, and inheritance (Kocaturk, 1999).

Ataturk greatly admired the support that the national liberation struggle received from women and praised their many contributions: "In Turkish society, women have not lagged behind men in science, scholarship, and culture. Perhaps they have even gone further ahead." (Ataturk) He gave women the same opportunities as men, including full political rights. After having voting rights in 1934, 18 women, among them a rural villager, were elected to the National Parliament in 1935 (Kocaturk, 1999, para. 1).

Today in Turkey, according to data gathered in academic year 2004-2005, female attendance was 91.85% in basic education (8-year compulsory education), whereas male attendance was 99.48%. In secondary education, female attendance was 71.88%, whereas male attendance was 89.53%. In higher education, for the age group that would attend college, female attendance was 25.97%, whereas male attendance was 34.78% (TUIK, 2006). Although a gap exists between female and male enrollment from early childhood education to higher education, this gap has been getting narrower.

When the gender ratios of faculty and students are scrutinized, the data show that in the 2003-2004 academic year, the female faculty ratio was 38%, while the male faculty ratio was 62%. Enrollment shows that females constitute 41% of college attendees, while males make up 59% of attendees. Although female enrollment has increased at the undergraduate level, this has not been reflected in the female faculty ratio. The same underrepresentation for female faculty has been seen in high status administrative ranks such as president, provost, and dean. Whereas 25% of total full professors are female, only 6% of female professors are president, 13% hold the provost position, and 14% hold the position of dean (KSSGM, 2003; YOK, 2006).

It is important to investigate the underrepresentation of high status Turkish women administrators in higher education. It is important to know how their administrative roles and personal lives have been affected by being a woman in a male-dominated and traditional society. What kinds of challenges, advantages, and disadvantages do they have in professional and personal lives? There is no research about high status women administrators in higher education in Turkey. Since this study was the first one to investigate this subject, its findings should provide opportunities to understand causes for the gap between women and men in these positions and to recommend policy changes for the disparities that exist.

#### *Purpose of Study*

This study focuses on the perceptions of high status Turkish women administrators in higher education. They were asked how they perform their administrative functions such as decision-making, motivation, coordination, and communication roles, and whether they have encountered any gender discrimination in exercising these roles and in their professional and personal lives. More specifically, the following research

questions were asked:

1. What are the demographic attributes of this sample of high status female administrators?
2. Did female administrators encounter gender discrimination while performing the following administrative roles, and if they so, what kind of gender discrimination have they experienced?
  - Decision-making
  - Motivation and coordination
  - Communication
3. In general, have they experienced gender discrimination in their professional lives in the context of the male-dominant society in which they live?
4. Have they experienced gender discrimination in their personal lives?

#### *Method*

In this study, mixed methods were used (Caracelli & Green, 1997; Patton, 1990). The main advantage of using multiple methods is the ability to overcome the risk of bias and singularity of viewpoint that can occur through the use of a single method approach. Quantitative data were gathered by administering a questionnaire. Questionnaires consisted of three parts. In one part, questions relate to collecting demographic data. The second part includes 25 items which are related to female administrators' perceptions about encountering gender discrimination in performing their administrative roles, such as decision-making, motivation and coordination, communication, and professional and personal lives. The third part is for voluntary narrative responses. In order to collect intensive data on topics that also appeared in the questionnaire, qualitative data were collected by asking open-ended questions which were mainly parallel to topics of the research questions. The aim was to collect data through open-ended questions that would be more reflective and natural. Based on responses to these questions, and to get more insight into the data, some interviews were also conducted .

The population and the sample for the study were defined as female high status administrators employed as president (rector), provost, and deans in higher education. Sixty questionnaires were mailed to all high status women administrators (total=60) in higher education. As a research sample, 31 of them replied. The return rate constitutes over 50% of the population. The sample consisted of one president (rector), 9 provosts, and 21 deans. Open-ended questions were administered to six high status women administrators located in different metropolitan areas, as well as small and conservative cities. Moreover, subjects were selected from universities possessing varying levels of development in terms of quality of academic programs, staff, and infrastructure.

The quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The voluntary narrative responses and responses to open-ended questions first were transcribed and coded by using an inductive coding approach, and meaningful themes were generated. Finally, findings were organized according to research questions. To confirm these findings, feedback from the informants was solicited (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

#### *Findings and Discussion*

*Demographic Data* . In this study, data were gathered from a president (3% of sample), provosts (29% of sample), and deans (68% of sample). Rank distributions of the respondents reflected distributions of population (see Table 1 ).

More than half of the subjects had held their current positions 1-3 years (55%). A majority of the high status female administrators were in the field of social studies (55%). The findings show that two thirds of female administrators are married; more than half of them have one child or no child (see Table 1).

Table 1

#### *Demographic Data on High Status Women Administrators*

Variables	Group	n	%
Administrative Positions	President	1	3

	Provost	9	29
	Dean	21	68
Number of years at current position	1-3 years	17	55
	4-6 years	11	36
	7-9 years	1	3
	10+ years	1	3
Academic Field	Sciences	6	19
	Social Sciences and Education	17	55
		8	26
	Medical Sciences		
Marital Status	Married	22	71
	Single	9	29
Number of Children	(0) none	10	32
	1	8	25
	2	12	39
	3	-	-
	4	1	3

Characteristics of the sample reflect social attitudes concerning which fields are more suitable for women. Warner and DeFleur (1993) pointed out that more than half of the women holding academic dean positions were in nursing, home economics, arts, and continuing education . Having more than two children might also be an indication of an obstacle in career development (Davidson & Cooper, 1987).

The survey, as well as the open-ended and interview questions, focused on four major areas in which female administrators may have perceived gender discrimination in exercising their administrative roles: decision-making, coordination, communication, and general professional and personal lives.

*Decision- Making Roles.* Did high status female administrators perceive any gender discrimination in exercising decision-making roles?

The quantitative data revealed that the majority of subjects perceived that their decision-making process was not affected by being female. To some extent they perceived that being a female facilitated their decision-making process in collecting data/evidence/information to solve problems, having their decisions accepted, and implementing their decisions. The majority of them stated that while they were performing their administrator roles, their gender did not affect their work positively or negatively (see Table 2). In short, most of female administrators perceived that their sex was unimportant in their work.

Table 2

*Distribution of Perceptions Related to Decision-Making Process*

	Positively		No effect		Negatively	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1- How does your gender affect your ability/practice in making rational decisions in accordance with goals of your institution?	4	13	26	84	1	3
2- How does your gender affect you in collecting data / information /evidence to solve problems at a male-dominant work place?	7	23	22	71	2	7
3- How does being a female affect the acceptance of your decisions by your employees?	11	36	20	65	-	-
4- How have your implementations of decisions been affected by being a female?	11	36	19	61	1	3
	Yes		No effect		No	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
5- Does being a female decision-maker in a male-dominated work environment create conflict within your organization?	2	7	12	39	17	55
6- Has being a woman influenced you to make decisions more in keeping with the traditions of your institution?	1	3	16	52	12	39
7- Do demands and pressures by faculty and staff affect your decision-making process because you are a female?	1	3	12	39	17	55
	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
8- At meetings and discussions, are your ideas, opinions and suggestions being met by unreasonable objections and skepticism because you are a female?	-	-	9	29	22	71
9- Do your faculty and staff think that you are not objective in your evaluations because you are a female?	1	3	8	26	21	68

Further analysis of qualitative data related to the decision-making process showed that there is no apparent gender discrimination. The qualitative data mostly paralleled the quantitative data. Subjects who answered open-ended questions and who were interviewed stated that the practice of decision-making was affected more by their personal attributes and the environment in which they worked than the fact that they were females.

However, most respondents perceived that female administrators were practicing better leadership than males. They believed that female administrators were more sensitive and innovative, as well as possessing more foresight. They used their power to encourage and to make their employees feel comfortable with themselves and their work. They took actions based on valid evidence. In essence, women administrators pointed out that they practiced the decision-making process collaboratively, democratically, and objectively. For these reasons, they perceived that their colleagues, superiors, and subordinates felt confidence in them and supported them. One of the respondents' statements is quoted below:

...As a woman, I am broadminded and compassionate to my employees. I prefer to exercise more democratic, facilitative and participative administration style. For me, also using common sense is very important. So I think that I have been more effective in making correct decisions and implementing them. When people see you work with your heart and work very hard, they accept you; they don't create barriers.

These findings paralleled the conclusions of Eagly's, et al. (1992) meta-analysis. They concluded that

traditional (autocratic, directive) leadership styles are seen as more favorable for male leaders, and cooperative, collaborative, and collegial work environments are more likely to be favorably viewed when they are part of women's participative leadership styles. Patton (1990) also reported that women managers in higher education are less interested in power and control; they perceived their leadership roles to be facilitative, relational, and contributory to the institution. Northcut (1991) also found that women define career success without a power orientation, and women focus more on contributing to society and others.

In addition, participants pointed out that high status women administrators in higher education must work very hard and be successful in order to be accepted by their colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and ultimately, within the institution and society. If female administrators are successful, their decisions are accepted and implemented easily; otherwise, it is thought that female administrator's failure belongs not only to one person, but is to be attributed to all females. Two of the respondents' answers are quoted below:

We need to be more proactive to be accepted by the male world. Because males took their places and positions earlier in the workplace, they look so comfortable, confident, daring and arrogant. In this case, you feel that you are supposed to struggle in order to explain yourself and to be listened to by them.

... Unfortunately, men were accepted as administrators or leaders, but women need to earn these titles. So we should work hard and prove ourselves. Moreover, we [female administrators] are accepted as representative of females. When a female fails in her work, this failure is attributed to all females rather than to only one person who has failed. Men have not these kinds of disadvantages. That's why we also need to work very hard to be accepted and to be good role models. As women, we have been led by society to take on our shoulders the responsibility of being representative of other females...

These verbal reports support research results that men were accepted as administrators and leaders; even female employees prefer them. Men also focus on power and expect it. In contrast to this, women should earn these positions (Casal & Mulligan, 2004).

Qualitative findings also showed that sometimes, before employees became familiar with women administrators' leadership styles, they misinterpreted women administrators' democratic, tolerant, and participative behaviors. Some of employees perceived that these attributes were evidence of women administrators' failure. Because of this, some employees try to take advantage, to make unreasonable requests, and to make unreasonable objections to women administrators. Respondents also stated that after employees understood the reasons for the behaviors of female administrators in terms of decisively applying principles, being fair, and making progress for the institution and society, employees became compliant. One of the subjects' statements is quoted below:

... Few of the employees, including females, tend to object to women administrators. These kinds of behaviors occurred because of women administrators' democratic and participative [leadership] styles. Women administrators are open to communication. But when they understand your democratic style of leadership, they also appreciate it. However, sometimes, female administrators in the same ranks could act jealously and try to sabotage the same gender. Specifically, sometimes female administrators do not support each other during University Board meetings as men do.

These statements show that faculty and staff are used to experiencing mostly a "male style autocratic, directive" administrative style (Milwid, 1990, p. 130). For this reason, democratic administrators' behaviors could be misunderstood. Besides, Shakeshaft (1995) stated that according to female administrators' beliefs, women are their own worst enemies.

Findings in this study also paralleled Shakeshaft's (1989) research results. On the one hand, employees do not like the autocratic leadership style in women administrators, but they do not object to it in men. When women displayed men's style of leadership, they were criticized. On the other hand, once women displayed female style of leadership, one which was democratic and participative, employees saw these traits as an indication of female administrators' failure.

In the qualitative data, one important issue appeared, even if it was not clearly seen as gender discrimination.



In the university administration board, the decision-making process has been affected by the informal network which is mostly made up of male administrators. Generally, for female administrators, especially single ones, it was not easy to participate in this social-informal network all the time in male dominated and traditional societies.

These findings support Milwid's assertions: Within informal networks such as lunch, dinner, sports events etc., solving problems and making decisions are easier away from a stressful work environment. Most of the time female administrators are not included within the social-informal network because of traditional values of society and male dominated environment. This type of exclusion removes women from decision-making spheres. As a result, women await announced policy decisions rather than being active players in the decision-making processes. "Social exclusion hurts women's careers most because it limits their exposure to the manager at the top. Without a relaxed atmosphere in which to meet leaders, female professionals have no access to policymakers other than through their work" (Milwid, 1990, p. 82).

Female administrators stated that to cope with the barrier of exclusion from the informal network, female administrators must have competence and a good reputation in their academic field, stand on their own two feet, and be instructional leaders. Under these conditions, they believe, their male administrator colleagues will listen and respect them.

*Motivation and coordination roles.* Did high status female administrators perceive any gender discrimination in exercising motivating and coordination roles, and in using and sharing power?

The quantitative findings revealed that the majority of respondents believe that being a female did not affect their motivating and coordination roles (71%), their use of power (83%), or sharing of power (71%) (see Table 3). More importantly, 29% of the respondents perceived that being a female administrator facilitated coordination and motivation. Thirteen percent of the respondents also perceived that being a female facilitated the use of power. Twenty-three percent of participants stated that being a female administrator facilitated the sharing of power with subordinates. In short, a majority of female administrators perceived that their sex was neither important nor an asset in their work environment .

Table 3

*Distribution of Perceptions Related to Motivation and Coordination*

	Positively		No Effect		Negatively	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1- How does being a woman affect your coordination and motivation efforts among the units of your institution?	9	29	22	71	-	-
2- While managing your employees, how does being a female affect you in exercising your administrative power?	4	13	26	83	1	3
3- Compared to your male colleagues, how does being a female affect you in sharing administrative powers with your subordinates?	7	23	22	71	2	7

Qualitative data show that being a female contributes positively in coordinating among academic and administrative units of the institution, using power to encourage and motivate employees, and sharing power with subordinates. According to participants' responses, performing these roles is not only related to being a female, but it is also related to other factors, such as personal attributes of administrators and employees, and competencies in academic field and in management.

Female administrators stated that they have experienced advantages in coordinating effectively among the academic and administrative units in their workplace and among employees since women plan well and take into account details in order to be successful. Since women demonstrate concern for the welfare of other people by showing affection, helpfulness, kindness, interpersonal sensitivity, caring, and empathy, female administrators motivate their employees easily.

Moreover, subjects pointed out that being a female was not a barrier for using power and sharing governance roles because for women administrators, sharing power, consensus, and democratic participation was more important than using power in an autocratic way. Participants also stated that employees expected that female administrators must behave more flexibly, sensitively, compassionately, and democratically than men. One of the respondents' statements is quoted below:

.....Faculty members and staff easily explain their problems to and make requests of female administrators. Your friendly and humanistic approach always affects them positively. If you make important progress for your institution and for society, they appreciate and respect you more. The amount of respect you receive and your effectiveness depend on your success and thoughtful behavior.

These findings support Casal and Mulligan's (2004) results. According to the data gathered from emerging women leaders, organization and determination have been found to be the strongest qualities for female administrators. Respondents next listed sensitivity, fairness, and intelligence, followed by listening and speaking skills, compassion, motivation, high morals, a sense of humor, and empathy.

Unfortunately, sometimes female administrators' democratic approach and compassionate behaviors were misinterpreted by their employees. Staff members would think that the administrator would do whatever staff wanted, even if the request was unjustified. But when they saw the administrators' decisive and fair attitudes, they gave up their unreasonable requests and stopped their misbehavior.

...Because you are a female administrator, your employees expect from you more flexible and sensitive behavior. At times, they may even have unreasonable expectations from you just because you are a female, especially if their requests are related to their motherhood and housekeeper roles.....

According to qualitative data, female administrators are open to sharing power with their subordinates in order to motivate them. But they stated that sometimes they have been limited in sharing power because of their employees' incompetence. Sharing power was also sometimes perceived by employees as a failure or indication of inadequacy. Two of the respondents' statements appear below:

I can share power in accordance with my employees' ability and job requirements like a mother who has some expectancy from her children according to their characteristics and abilities.

Unfortunately, when you share your power for the sake of achievement for your institution and for your students and employees, some of the staff thinks that you are incapable of doing your job. So I can share my power to motivate my employees, but I need to control whether everything goes well or not.

These findings support some of the prior assertions in which people expected more flexibility, sensitivity, and empathy from female administrators; they also assessed these behaviors as indications of female administrators' weakness (Shakeshaft, 1989). These stereotypic thoughts are significant challenges for women administrators to handle.

*Communication roles.* Did female administrators encounter gender discrimination in their communication with their superiors, subordinates, and other institutions with which they collaborated?

Quantitative findings showed that female administrators did not encounter gender discrimination in communicating with their subordinates, superiors, and others. To some extent they perceived that being a female facilitated their communication with people with whom they worked. The majority of them stated that while they were performing their administrator roles, their gender did not affect their work positively or negatively (see Table 4). Therefore, for the most part, female administrators thought their sex was as unimportant in this domain as it is in decision-making, coordination, and motivation roles.

Table 4

*Distribution of Perceptions Related to Communication*

	Positively		No Effect		Negatively	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1- Does being a woman affect positively or negatively your communication with your faculty and staff?	17	55	14	45	-	-
2- Does being a female affect your communication with your superiors positively or negatively?	8	26	2	71	-	-
3- Does being a female affect your collaborations with other institutions positively or negatively?	10	32	20	65	-	-

Qualitative data paralleled the quantitative data. Data indicated that female administrators did not confront gender discrimination in communicating with their subordinates, superiors, and other institutions. Female administrators perceived that regarding communication skills, females were better than males. Some of the respondents' statements are quoted below:

In administration, I believed that personality traits are more important than gender. However, I can say that because female administrators have communication skills naturally, we can have a chance to be better administrators/leaders.

...People in our country have come to accept female administrators. Mostly they think that we [females] are better. I think that males have accepted us as independent, skillful, and successful people.

...Being from a university provides an advantage in one's relationships with other institutions. Because society has confidence in and respect for university faculty members, private and public organizations are even more respectful when dealing with female faculty administrators.

They also stated that higher level administrators' attitudes toward female administrators are important in shaping other employees' behaviors, such as accepting, respecting, and relying on female administrators. A statement from a female administrator is quoted below:

I am not exposed to any discrimination because, as a female administrator, I have the respect and confidence of my president (rector). Colleagues of mine who hold the same rank as I, as well as faculty member and staff modeled him in their behavior toward me. That is, they showed the same attitudes, respect, and confidence toward me as my president showed.

In the meantime, they also stated that a female administrator's success was important to establish communication, coordination, and collaboration with superiors, subordinates, and other institutions. One respondent's statement is given below:

As a female administrator, having advantages or disadvantages in communication and collaboration with your superior, employees, and other institutions depend on how successful you are in your work and in your academic field. If you are successful, then they are confident in you to do your best; they behave very well towards you and support you. As an administrator, for me power is not important. I try to develop my institution at my own level. So, people believed in me that I am trying to do my best for my faculty, staff, institution and ultimately for my students and society. That's why I have gotten support from my superior, colleagues, subordinates, and other institutions, especially from my students.

"Communication, lifeblood of every school organization, is a process that links the individual, the group and the organization" (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996, p. 176). Thus, communication plays a crucial role for organization, employees, and students to achieve their goals

In short, when quantitative and qualitative data were considered together, findings showed that female administrators perceived that they did not encounter any gender discrimination in communicating with their superiors, subordinates, and other institutions. They even stated that being female facilitated their communication and collaboration because women administrators focused on doing their best for their students, faculty, staff, and ultimately for society rather than exerting power on others. Many authors posit also show

that, on the whole, women's communication skills are better than men's and their communication style more supportive and effective (Casal & Mulligan, 2004; Samover & Porter, 2003).

Nevertheless, qualitative data also showed that female administrators still need the help and support of their superiors, and they also need to be more successful than men in order to be accepted by their superiors, subordinates, and others. This finding might indicate Brown's and Irby's (2001) assertions that low confidence and poor self-image are common internal barriers for female administrators.

*General professional life.* Did female administrators perceive any gender discrimination in their general professional lives?

Quantitative data showed that the majority of female administrators did not feel uncomfortable while they were performing their professional roles within the male-dominant institution. For example, 90% of them did not hesitate to participate in meetings where there are a small number of females or where they are the only female present. Ninety percent of respondents stated that they did not encounter any negative attitudes toward them during meetings.

Nevertheless, 61% of respondents perceived that they should exercise more caution, which means that they need to meet society's expectations of women, both in their professional and private lives. Sixty percent of them also perceived that they must work harder to be successful than their male colleagues (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Distribution of Perceptions Related to Professional and Personal Life*

	Yes		No		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1- Do you hesitate to participate in meetings that a small number of females will be attending or in which you will be the only woman?	3	10	28	90	-	-
2- Do you feel uncomfortable during meetings because you are a female?	1	3	28	90	2	7
3- Do you feel uncomfortable by your male colleagues' conversation styles and behavior during meetings?	2	7	26	84	3	10
4- Do you think you should exercise more caution than males both in your professional life and personal life?	19	61	11	36	1	3
5- Do you think you need to treat people in the same manner that your male colleagues do?	-	-	28	90	3	10
6- Do you think you should work harder to be successful than your male colleagues do?	21	68	9	29	1	3
7- Compared to your male colleagues, do you allocate enough time for your family (husband, children, other relatives)?	15	48	14	45	2	7
8- Compared to your male colleagues, do you have enough spare time for your hobbies?	5	16	24	77	2	7
9- Compared to your male colleagues, do you spend more time at work at the expense of family time?	24	77	3	10	4	13
10- Are the number of meetings you are required to attend as part of your administrative duties affecting your family life negatively?	13	42	15	48	3	10

High status administrative roles provide women with many professional and personal benefits such as recognition; respect; intellectual fulfillment in professional life; and enhanced self-esteem, autonomy, and

variety. Nevertheless, in the meantime high status administrative roles have some professional and personal costs for women, such as stereotypical expectations, expanded responsibilities, time limitations in their professional and personal lives, limitations in interpersonal relationships, and role conflicts in their personal lives (Brown & Irby, 2001; Simmons & Jarchow, 1990). In addition, many research findings also show that a woman must be more competent and work harder than a man in order to obtain and maintain the same career advancement (Stiegemeier, 1980).

The qualitative data show many similarities with the quantitative data. Female administrators perceived that for the most part they did not encounter gender discrimination in their professional lives. Female administrators stated that they do not hesitate to participate in male-dominant meetings; they are not bothered by their male colleagues' manners and speeches since their male counterparts pay more attention to their behavior if females are present at meetings.

However, female administrators also pointed out that they experienced some limitations in their lives in order to satisfy public expectations. Yet the limitations women experienced varied depending on the size of the city in which the university was located and the level of development of university. Female administrators in big cities and developed universities are less affected by the traditional expectations of society. Some of the quotations derived from participants' statements are given below:

...University College of Law is the first higher education institution in the Republic of Turkey, and I am the first female dean who was assigned to this position by vote. I did not experience any difficulties because I am a female because of the progressive characteristics of this institution.

...I mostly attend meetings that are male-dominant. I did not encounter any unpleasant situations so far.

...Being a female neither facilitates my work nor does it create a barrier in my work. I always participate in male-dominant meetings. I have not experienced any unsatisfactory situations. The reason why I didn't have any difficulty as a faculty member or as an administrator is that the meetings I attend are mostly academic. In cultural or social meetings, our personality traits can help us establish good communications or create barriers for us. I think these kinds of opportunities or barriers are no different for either women or men.

...I felt that I was being more self-sacrificing than my male colleagues. There are some difficulties in being a female administrator. When I attend some of the meetings as a representative of the institution, I feel alone.

...If my husband did not participate with me in male dominant-meetings in the evening, I felt that people found it a little odd that I was attending without my husband. These kinds of thoughts bothered me. Yet I do not want to push my husband to attend these meetings which I should attend.

This finding parallels Switzer's (2006) finding that some of the female presidents who she interviewed did not expect their husbands to attend all the events.

As a result, although qualitative and quantitative findings show that female administrators did not experience important gender discrimination, some of the findings still show that some of society's traditional expectations of females limited high status female administrators' professional lives, especially in conservative and small cities.

*Personal life.* Did female administrators perceive any gender discrimination in their personal lives?

According to quantitative and qualitative data related to the allocation of time in female administrators' professional and personal lives, findings show that a majority of female administrators spent most of their time in their work by sacrificing their personal and family time (77%). One third of the participants stated that because of household responsibilities, they allocate less time for their academic studies than those of male counterparts. Another third of the respondents pointed out that they are able to spend enough time for their academic studies by sacrificing their time for hobbies. The final one third of respondents perceived that they did not experience differences in terms of allocating time for their academic lives in comparison with their male colleagues (see Table 5).

The big disadvantage female administrators' experienced is that they are not able to allocate their time for their hobbies, families, and work in a well-balanced manner. One of the reasons for this disadvantage might be that the dedication of female administrators to be successful in their work comes at a cost to both family life and personal life. The other reason might be traditional expectations of society from female administrators.

Qualitative findings parallel the quantitative findings. Some of the quotations derived from respondents' statements are given below:

...My work always comes first in my life. This is related to my personality rather than my administration duties. When my children were young, sometimes I felt guilty towards them. So I tried to allocate more time for them. For female professionals, I think life is always stressful because everybody expects you to satisfy their needs; you need to spend time for your academic studies, administrative duties, your personal needs; you are supposed to dress professionally; ...everything takes time ... Your students, your faculty, and your staff need you; you are supposed to develop infrastructure in your college, to contribute to your university both at the national and international level. Your children and husband are waiting for you to take care of them... even if your husband is very helpful in every way. So you need more than 24 hours in a day as a professional woman.

...Yes ...a female administrator is at a clear disadvantage in terms of allocating enough time for her family, herself, husband, and children in comparison with male colleagues. Time constraints cause stress. This is because you should do many tasks in a limited time period and you are supposed to satisfy your superior, your counterparts, your subordinates, your family, your relatives, your friends. In this case, you end up sacrificing the time which must be allocated for your family, relatives and good friends for the sake of your professional life. I think, as female administrators, we pay more than male colleagues in terms of balancing our professional and personal lives.

These findings parallel Switzer's (2006) findings and Simmons' and Jarchow's (1990) assertions; they pointed out that increased responsibilities require spending more time on job-related tasks. McMillen (1987) also described universities as "stress factories." Overloaded academic and administrative lives and family obligations cause female administrators to sacrifice their own time and family time. Brown, Van Ummersen, and Sturnick (2001) also assert that family issues are more challenging for female presidents than for their male colleagues. "As women strive to achieve professional success and recognition, they still feel societal pressure to assume more conventional roles" (Brown & Irby, 2001, back cover). To balance professional and personal lives is one of the greatest challenges for many female administrators.

#### Summary and Conclusion

This study investigated how top level Turkish women administrators perform their administrative functions, and whether they encounter any gender discrimination in exercising their administrative roles such as decision-making, motivation, coordination, communication, and in conducting their professional and personal lives.

In both quantitative and qualitative findings, female administrators perceived that they were not confronted with significant gender discrimination while performing administrative duties. In their decision-making process, female administrators stated that they are more objective and sensitive, preferring a collaborative, democratic approach. They take actions based on valid evidence; therefore, their colleagues, superiors, and subordinates have felt confidence in them. However, female administrators experienced that exercising a democratic and participative approach was sometimes seen as an indication of weakness and incompetence in women administrators. These stereotypic expectations are important challenges for female administrators to overcome.

In addition, female administrators felt that they were supposed to work harder to be as successful as their male counterparts. Their existence at the top level of decision-making in professional life--in academic and in administrative lives--depends on their competence and success. Female administrators were also seen as representative of all women. Because of these perceptions, an individual female administrator's success or

failure is attributed to all females whereas a man's is not. This approach places more responsibility on the shoulders of women leaders. Female administrators are also expected to be good role models for their female students, colleagues, and subordinates.

Quantitative and qualitative findings showed that female administrators have not experienced gender discrimination in the motivation and coordination roles. They have even experienced advantages in motivating employees and coordinating effectively among the academic and administrative units. Since women take into account others' welfare, demonstrate helpfulness, kindness, and sensitivity, female administrators motivate their faculty, staff, and others easily. They also prefer sharing power, consensus, and democratic participation rather than using power in an autocratic way.

In communicating with superiors, subordinates, and other institutions, female administrators perceived that they did not experience apparent gender discrimination. In addition, they believed that since women demonstrated helpfulness, kindness, listening to others, and explained the rules and procedures in order for people to understand and apply them, female administrators were superior in communication skills than males.

In quantitative and qualitative findings, female administrators perceived that for the most part they did not encounter gender discrimination in their professional and personal lives. Mostly, they do not hesitate to participate in male-dominant meetings, and they do not feel that they need to treat people in the same manner that their male colleagues do. But they feel that they should exercise more caution than males both in their professional and personal lives. If universities where female administrators worked were located in small or conservative cities, women administrators needed to have more caution and had to work harder because everybody's eyes were on them both within the workplace and outside of it. The majority of female administrators spent most of their time at work by sacrificing their personal and family time. For female administrators, achieving a balance between professional and personal lives is the greatest challenge.

As a result, findings indicate that, although female administrators are respected by society and they have not encountered significant gender discrimination, they are underrepresented and under the pressure of social expectations. The number of female administrators increases in institutions of higher education, as it should. Both pre-service and in-service educational programs must be developed for female administrators to gain confidence and develop their administrative skills. In addition, as good role models groundbreaking women administrators must be encouraged to share their experiences to motivate young women students to aim to be top level administrators.

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